

# **CHURCH OF THE CHURCH (ACT)**

## **A RITE OF HONORING CANON.**

**6/8/2023 At 3.00 a.m.**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- Salaam.
- Shukurani kukaribishwa.

I received the invitation of the Bishop of the Diocese to come and participate in this day service of Mrana, which also has the occasion to be the hashma of our Pastoral brothers and Laity as well. I thank all of them.

The Prayer Book of our State has no organized order for such a Devotion; but as this is a good thing, I deem it good for the Church to have the order of receiving the parties to this respect of canonization, as the Bishop did.

In my living and serving in the Church, I have seen those appointed by the Bishop especially during Synod, even outside Synod, continued only to be called Ma Canon, even without special Rites.

In addition, for the nearly 52 years I worked as a Pastor and then as a Bishop, I never saw it convened a Ma-Canon Seminar; or even during the Synod, to be told the duty of the Canon.

I remember once as an assistant bishop, under Bishop Madinda DCT, when I once called all the canons with the approval of the Bishop of the Diocese. But the Bishop of the Diocese was skeptical: He asked me "what do you want to tell them?"

It was a difficult question for me because I wasn't canon! I expected him to be the one to explain the meaning and responsibility of the Canon.

He allowed me to call them, and he agreed to be present.

I only bit myself a fork in my notes; and he consented to tell a little about the Canon, then out of his heart of love of Evangelism, spent a long time speaking of the Canon, so that the Canon might know his burden concerning the work of Evangelism in the Diocese.

In this testimony, I would like to say I consider it a very good thing for the Bishop to have a Service with this occasion of honoring the canon.

This devotional gives us a platform to speak the Word about the Canon's place in the Church, and uniquely in the Diocese.

I know there are Christians and even some Pastors, who we would ask the Canon who they are, they probably wouldn't be able to give a satisfactory answer. It's even possible some of the Canon themselves don't have much of an understanding, what their dignity holds. Canon is not a title, it is an honor in service in the Church of Christ.

## **2. EPHESIANS 4:11-16**

I prayed to God to give me a word that would be right now.

I was inspired to read the Word from **Ephesians 4:11f**, where it is mentioned a list of the ministers whom the Lord Jesus sends to earth through his Church, for the ministry of the Church.

The ministry is about perfecting (or empowering) the saints (i.e. Christians) so that they can do the Lord's service well in the body of Christ.

The one who gives these gifts is the risen Lord.

They are leaders in the body of Christ.

Purpose: **to perfect the saints (who are the body of Christ).**

**Ephesus 4:12.**

These gifts to leaders are to be used for the whole community of the Church (Articles 12, 13).

The main purpose of those who are called and given the ministry, is to perfect the saints, or in simple terms, to build up the power of

Christians, so that each one of them is according to the gifts given to them by God.

- They can do the Lord's service.
- Let them continue to grow in faith, focusing on the study of Christ; so that they may not grow in infancy, but grow to a greater knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a great thing for anyone who is called to the ministry of Christ. His goal should be "those saints, who have the task of being light and salt on earth".

They are to be able to know God so that they can be used for the service to which they are called.

In the list, they are:

- Apostles and Prophets: these lay the foundation of the Christian Church (**Eph 2:20**) "... You are built on the foundation..."  
Evangelists: these are missionaries, taking the Gospel to new places, where faith is not preached.

Like **Philip (Acts 21:8; 8:6-40);**

**Timo (2 Tim 4:5)**

Epaphras as well

- Pastors and Teachers.  
Pastors – (those are elders and bishops) – feed, protect and look after the flock.  
Teachers – (these with the prophets (**Acts 13:1**) and **1 Cor 12:28**). Teaching service.  
Article 12f The purpose of their ministry – to bring the message of God's Word and teaching.

In **1 Tim 3:1f** they are mentioned bishops and deacons (**Acts 6:3; Philippians 1:1**) The bishop is the overseer and the deacon is the servant of the Church.

### **3. A History of "Canon" in the Anglican Church.**

Now the question you can ask yourself is, which group do they fall into? Who are these? Where in the Bible are they mentioned so that they can have a little comfort?

There is no mention of the canon!

**I ask that we now look at the issue of the Canon, by first looking at its history, and how the Anglican Church has set up that order.**

It is important to see whether or not it is God's Word.

**Their history and place in the Anglican Church: -**

**i. The Canon:**

It's like a rule (of testing), a criterion, the rules (miongozo) set, customs, etc so that people can follow.

**ii. The term was originally used for any of the pastors who served in the Diocese.**

Later it was about the ministers (Pastors) of the main Kanisa and paid by the Cathedral. So, the Cathedral Pastor was called Canon of the Cathedral. The term Canon is an honor conferred by the Bishop of the Diocese to the Reverend (and sometimes to the Laity).

It was particularly concerning the Pastors paid by the Cathedral.

**iii. There were also pastors called Ma-Canon, outside those of the cathedral. They were not paid. But they were able to have certain positions in the Cathedral, for example holding Worship; Mission and Evangelism works; and other work invited.**

These were old at work and experienced among the Shepherds.

They helped the work of the Diocese as the Bishop directed.

**iv. Deacons: Was able to be awarded the honour of Canon as well.**

## **Nominations/nominations**

The Canon was elected or appointed by the Bishop of the Diocese.

### **Qualifications to be nominated**

#### **Shepherds:**

- They can be appointed to those who have completed a minimum of six years of service.
- They have been faithful in their service for several years.
- Their lives are fair and respectful.

#### **Mashemasi.**

The deacons also, who have served for a term exceeding 6 years, were able to be honoured as Canon of the Cathedral. But these were not allowed to read the mass or give a ghoul.

#### **The Laity.**

They could also be given the honor of U-Canon, if they showed exceptional service in the Church. They were given the honor, in recognition of their exceptional service or service.

#### **There are some things to consider here for all of them: -**

- The honor of Canon was given to those who served and lived a life of honor, honesty, integrity for several years, so much as their service draws respect.
- The life of the person being accorded that honor was supposed to be an example to other ministers as the meaning of the word is. They were required to learn from these pastors (compare the Apostle Paul's words to **Timothy – 2 Tim 2:2; 3:14** and Hebrews **13:7**).
- There are times when this honor could only be temporary, i.e. it was not a lifetime (e.g. when a person is given to be a musical

Canon; when he leaves and the honor of Canon, he leaves it). For he was given a Canon for special work.

- The Canon belonged to the Cathedral.

**their responsibility.**

- **Maintaining the Worship** of the Cathedral.
- **The Dean of the Cathedral** and all the **Canon** of the Cathedral **oversaw the administration of the Cathedral. They were the ones who formed the "Chapter" or the Council of the Cathedral.**
- They were **advisers** to the Archbishop.
- They were responsible **for keeping and administering all the Rules or Regularities of the Cathedral.** As a form of worship; Distribution of funds, buildings, Cathedral Traditions, Decorations etc.
- **Preach.**
- **Be an example to other employees.**
- Other activities **will be assigned by the Bishop.**
- They had the right to **elect or reject an appointed Bishop.**
- **Spiritual Fathers.**

**Angalizo.**

As the Apostle Paul says in **1 Tim 3:6**, the Servant was asked not to let it be before he grew in faith, of course and in ministry.

This is a warning to the Bishop himself. Don't be fast. Be careful. He can get the advice of **the Canon**, before he acts.

He doesn't want to be a friend just because he's a friend. It is dangerous because he will lack the courage to advise him.

**4. CANON SPACE TODAY. (in our state).**

After all these (historical) explanations, **what do we learn from history and those details?**

**I have previously asked the question: Where do the Holy Scriptures point us to in regards to the work of the Canon?**

If we search the Bible we cannot see the Canon being cited, but with the guidance of God's Word, we can see that this is not contradictory to the Bible.

➤ I am moved to see the position of U-Canon compared to that of the elderly. Many Old Testament leaders were surrounded by elders. For example, Moses Exodus **18:12; 24:1** mentions the elders of Israel, also 70 elders.

➤ In the New Testament;

We also see the elders named to take care of the flock.

**Phrases such as;**

**Matthew 15:2 - The tradition** of the elders (they kept the tradition)

**Acts 20:17** - The responsibility of managing and feeding the flock of the Church.

**1 Pet 5:1f** shepherding the flock.

**Titus 1:5** warns against heretics

**1 Tim 5:19** care in handling their values, they are people who carry honor.

Now you're looking at

- Their choice of qualities.
- The reason for their responsibilities.

We can see the wisdom that led the Church to have people who will have a place like that of elders in the midst of the community of God's children. Spiritually qualified people, and responsible for the shepherding of sheep.

➤ But also, the Bible tells us **God is orderly.**

For example see:

**1 Corinthians 14:33, 40** God is not chaotic. Things happen in order.

**1 Tim 3:2** Let the "elder" bishop be a man of order.

**1 Thessalonians 3:6, 7, 11** Paul rebukes the unordered.

**1 Thessalonians 5:14** Warn those who do not stay in order.

So, if you look at the Bible you will see that this Canon position is not in conflict with the Word of God. Canon exists to oversee "order" in the Church, as the meaning of the word Canon is.

Look at their characteristics:

He is a minister of the Church.

A person who is committed to serving the church.

Righteous.

His life as an example

Experience at work (**1 Tim 3:2**) – avoid arrogance.

For this is a good place, and a gracious and honourable one: It is good that we should ask our MaCanon the following things:-

- a) To be honored by Canon, is a big deal. You've seen even in history, they were very careful who gets this honor.

It is of great importance this privilege to be given to a mature man in the faith; and more one who remained in service for a sufficient time (**1 Tim 3:2**). This gives him authority to be a spiritual father among his fellow ministers. He was given a **lot of humility**. (**1 Peter 5:6**).

- b) Canonism is **an honor**, not a title. This honor does not apply to sitting in front seats, but serving in the Church.

Respect **is about service**, not all of it. The teaching of the Lord Jesus here may help us, see **Luke 22**; and **John 13**. Being honored here is akin to recognizing a character's self-centered heart. So, he has to continue to serve more.

Any position of the Church, whether hierarchy or **honor** must be **aimed at service "perfecting the saints (Eph 4:12)**.

c) Canon as **elders**, take specimens like Barnabas (Paul's fellow servant). He was like a father to Mark. He encouraged him when he saw that he was unable to meet the challenges of service.

It is possible that the other Canon may have leaned toward Paul's side, by not giving Mark (or the young servants) room to grow and learn.

Let us remember, any ministry in the Church exists to empower the faithful (saints).

*In the past some Canon were very threatening to the ministers. They looked like rulers. They forgot they are spiritual fathers and pastors still.*

d) The Canon of and should pay close attention to their duty to be **advisors**. They need to take advantage of this responsibility, especially when they are a bishop. Do not bring the bishop to the bishop, for they will mislead him in making decisions.

If you are an assistant to a leader and have the opportunity to advise him, do not abuse that position. It is there to build the Church of Christ, not to tear it down (see **again Eph 4:12**) or to please the bishop.

The Canon must be truthful to enable the Bishop to make the right decisions in God's work.

(Example: **1 Kings 22**: Ahab and the prophet Micaiah).

e) Another major concern is the need for spiritual Fathers in the Church.

When the church lacks spiritual fathers, people may lack spiritual leadership among them. Judges 2: **8, 10, 11** and **2 Timothy 1:5**; See **also Heb 13:7**.

We live in times when if we lack servant fathers or elders (whether female or male) who are spiritual, the Church will lose direction.

See **Ephesians 4:14**

The Church's stability in these last days depends heavily on those responsible for shepherding, teaching and managing the spirituality they have in God's sight.

You are among them.

Stand in your place. Let me repeat that your honor is meant to serve, so that the children of God may be built in the unity of faith for the Lord's sake.

- f. The last thing is what the apostle Paul says in Ephesians 6:19-20. Christians must pray for the Canon and all the other ministers of the Church, so that they may be given the grace to serve faithfully in the positions to which they are called.

The Lord bless them.